GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4571
ANSWERED ON:29.03.2017
Indian Neutrino Observatory
George Shri (Adv.) Joice;Panda Shri Baijayant "Jay"

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Government is building India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) in the country and if so, the details and the present status thereof along with the steps taken by the Government for the timely completion of the said observatory;

(b)whether the Government has engaged any stakeholders for the purpose of deliberations and discussions on the said projects and if so, the details thereof;

(c)whether the Government proposes to shift the location of the said observatory and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d)whether the Government has received any representation from any States and its residents against the construction of the said observatory; and

(e)if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (Dr. JITENDRA SINGH) :

(a)Yes, Sir. The Government intends to set up the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) in West Bodi Hills, Theni District of Tamil Nadu. The project is awaiting a clearance from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. The project is held up because of the long overdue Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) clearance. Presently the TNPCB has formed a committee of experts to advise it for further course of action.

(b)A public meeting was organized by the Theni Collector on 8th July, 2010. This was attended by about 1200 persons mostly from the nearby villages, including panchayat members, local MLAs, District officials, DSP as well as members of the press. There was vocal questioning by the villagers. INO scientists patiently explained all the features of the project. At the end of the meeting, the Collector, with the consent of the members present, gave the go ahead for the INO project.

While DAE has carried out many science outreach programmes at nearby schools and colleges and public outreach programmes in nearby villages, members of the INO team stationed at Madurai and Theni regularly visit Pottipuram and interact with the local populace.

(c)No, Sir. At present, there is no proposal to shift the location of INO.

(d)No, Sir. There is no representation from any neighbouring state. However, there are two PILs, one in the Madurai bench of the Madras High court by Mr. Vaiko and another in the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern zone, Chennai by Mr. G. Sunderrajan.

(e)The High Court has passed an interim order restraining commencement of the research work of the project, without getting necessary clearance from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. The TNPCB clearance was applied for on 22-5-2015 and is still awaited. A few days back TNPCB has formed an expert committee to look into the matter. As for the NGT case, TNPCB did not respond for a long time leading to postponements. The NGT case has had a ruling by the Hon'ble judge that the Environmental Clearance issued by MoEF is in abeyance and a fresh application has to be made by INO.
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